**English 12**

**2014 - 2015**

**Course Description and Syllabus**

**This above all: to thine own self be true,

And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man. **

[*Hamlet Act 1, scene 3, 78–82*](http://www.enotes.com/hamlet-text/act-i-scene-iii#ham-1-3-82)

**Course Description**

In these oft-quoted lines from Shakespeare’s Hamlet which we will read later in the year, Polonius, counselor to the King, attempts to give his sone, Laertes, some advice. How wise this counsel may be will depend upon our careful reading of the text. Our modern sentiment would lead us to believe that Laertes should, at all costs, take his own counsel and do he believes to be true. We love this advice. However, it might be somewhat at odds with the thinking of the ancients who are our guides in nearly all things at Latin. In addition, it does not address the issue of how we know ourselves. This course will, therefore, have as its goal, the essential question of “Who am I?”

By the time you complete this course, you will be closer to an answer of this question through the close reading of several key texts, clear written analysis and careful attention to oral expression and listening in our class discussions and seminars. This course will use the seminar format for daily discussion and a workshop method for the writing.Students will be expected to develop the habit of listening, as well as speaking.The kinds of writings are varied, but include writing to understand, writing to explain, and writing to evaluate. The essence of scholarship is the combination of these three approaches to writing. You will complete one **research project** per semester. The research project in the first semester will explore a topic related to Psychology. You will also read **one independent reading book** per semester from a carefully defined list of options.

In general, the successful student will work hard, lean into the discomfort of constructive criticism and/or disagreement from both me and classmates, read carefully, and maintain an open, curious, intellectual mind.

In the course, we will read these works:

**Summer Reading:**

Kerouac, Jack. *On the Road*

**Plays:**

Shaffer, Peter. *Equus*

Shakespeare, William*. Hamlet* scenes

Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*

**Short Stories:**

O’Connor, Flannery. “Parker’s Back”

Twain, Mark. “Cannabalism in the Cars”

**Non-fiction**

Du Bois, W.E.B. excerpts from *The Souls of Black Folk (choose certain of the chapters)*

Freud, Sigmund. *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria (144 pages)*

Krakauer, John. *Into the Wild*

Rymer, Russ. *Genie: A Scientific Tragedy (256 pages)*

Thoreau, Henry David.excerpts from *Walden*

We may add or take away titles, depending upon how successful we are as a group.

**General Communication**

Organization and communication are keys to success in this class. If you are not particularly strong in these areas, you will learn to be.You will need to get in the habit of checking your Latin email, using google docs and the google calendar, if you are not already in the habit of doing so. I send emails frequently throughout the year, which often require a response.

If you have a smart phone which can connect with the google calendar, I share the English 12 calendar. You can also see it through your school email and the wiki. On the calendar, I post all assignments and all reading, as attachments. There will be no excuse for not knowing what is going on or when things are due.

**Grading**

By the end of the course, the grading rubric will look as follows:

Participation = 10%

Class Work = 10%

Homework = 20%

Major Assignments = 60%

I will never accept late work. This might strike you as a new policy or, if not new, rather harsh. My reasoning for this policy goes something like this – most of our alum have reported that the single biggest detriment they experienced at Latin was flexibility of deadlines, even with a small penalty. I feel particularly responsible for preparing you for the future. Thus, unless you contact me, in advance, to make other arrangements, your work will not be accepted after the deadline. You MUST, therefore, be sure to stay in communication.